

What Laws and Rules Govern Juvenile Probation and Supervision Officers?



Juvenile probation and supervision officers are bound by all state and federal laws. The primary bodies of law that govern these officers may be accessed at the Texas Legislature Online at www.capitol.state.tx.us:

- Juvenile Justice Code – Texas Family Code Title III
- Texas Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure
- Texas Human Resources Code
- Texas Education Code
- Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Chapters 341 – 358 (TJJD Standards)

Are Probation and Supervision Officers Bound by a Code of Ethics?

Yes, both juvenile probation and supervision officers are bound by a professional Code of Ethics governing the performance of their duties and their professional conduct.

The people of Texas expect juvenile justice professionals to exhibit unfailing honesty and respect for the dignity and individuality of human beings and display a commitment to professional and compassionate service.

Juvenile probation departments, juvenile justice programs and juvenile justice facilities shall have written policies and procedures for reporting violations of the code of ethics to the administration of the juvenile probation department, juvenile justice programs or juvenile justice facility and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

The Code of Ethics for juvenile probation officers and juvenile supervision officers can be found in Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 345. This code may be downloaded from the TJJD website at www.tjjd.texas.gov

Juvenile justice professionals found to be in violation of the provisions of this subsection shall be subject to disciplinary action including suspension, revocation or denial of the professional certification issued under the authority of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

What Resources are Available for Juvenile Justice Professionals?

There are a variety of written resources available to assist Texas JPOs and JSOs. These include:

- *Texas Juvenile Law*, written by Professor Robert O. Dawson of UT Law School and its accompanying supplement which is updated following each Legislative Session
- Compliance Resource Manual (CRM) –TJJD publication that provides detailed explanations of standards and compliance requirements.

Internet websites that may assist juvenile justice professionals include:



- American Bar Association Juvenile Justice Center at www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus/home.html
- American Correctional Association at www.aca.org
- American Probation and Parole Association at www.appa-net.org
- Juvenile Justice Association of Texas at www.jjat.com
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges at www.ncjfcj.org
- National Juvenile Detention Association at www.njda.com
- Texas Corrections Association at www.txcorrections.org
- Texas Juvenile Detention Association at www.tjda.us
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department at www.tjjd.texas.gov
- Texas Probation Association at www.shsu.edu/cjcenter/CMIT/tpa.htm
- US Department of Justice National Criminal Justice Reference Service at www.ncjrs.org

For More Information

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TEXAS JUVENILE PROBATION AND SUPERVISION OFFICERS

An Overview on Becoming a Certified Juvenile Justice Professional: Process, Duties and Responsibilities



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Texas Juvenile Justice Professionals

The Texas juvenile justice system is one of the largest and most complex in the nation serving over one hundred thousand juveniles each year. Juvenile probation officers (JPO) and juvenile supervision officers (JSO) are dedicated professionals who are on the front lines in rehabilitating troubled youth. This brochure provides an overview of the requirements for becoming a JPO or JSO, the certification process and the key responsibilities of certified officers who choose this profession.



What is Required to Become a Juvenile Probation or Supervision Officer in Texas?

JPOs and JSOs must meet certain basic educational and other requirements:

Juvenile Probation Officers. The requirements for becoming a JPO are found in the Texas Human Resources Code Section 222.001 and Title 37 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 344. These include:

- At least 21 years of age;
- Good moral character;
- Bachelor's degree from accredited university;
- One year of graduate study in area approved by TJJD or one year of work experience in the juvenile justice or related field;
- No disqualifying criminal history; and
- Never have had any type of certification revoked by lawful authority of the former TJPC or the TJJD

Juvenile Supervision Officers. The requirements for becoming a JSO are found in Title 37 TAC Chapter 344. These include:

- At least 21 years of age;
- Good moral character;
- High school diploma or equivalent;
- No disqualifying criminal history; and
- Never have had any type of certification revoked by lawful authority of the former TJPC or the TJJD



What are the Requirements to be Certified by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department?

JPOs and JSOs are certified by TJJD using the web-based *Integrated Certification Information System* (ICIS). Certification requires employment by a juvenile probation department or a juvenile facility. The legal requirements for certification are found in Title 37 TAC Chapter 344. An individual can be certified as both a JPO and JSO simultaneously if all requirements for each position are met.

Training. JPOs and JSOs are required to have 80 hours of professional training in mandatory topics within 18 months prior to the submission of the certification application. JPOs must have training that address 11 specific topics as detailed in Section 344.620 of TAC. JSOs must have training that addresses 10 specific topics as detailed in Section 344.620 and must receive training in first aid, CPR and an approved physical restraint technique. Juvenile supervision officers working in juvenile justice facilities must receive training in an additional 15 mandatory topics for certification.

Disqualifying Criminal History. An individual with the following criminal history shall not be eligible for employment or certification as a JPO or JSO:

- A felony conviction within the past 10 years;
- A deferred adjudication for a felony within the past 10 years;
- A current felony deferred adjudication, probation or parole;
- A jailable misdemeanor conviction within the past five years;
- A deferred adjudication for a jailable misdemeanor within the past five years;
- A current jailable misdemeanor deferred adjudication, probation or parole; or
- The requirement to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure

The offense disposition date shall be used to determine applicable time frames. The applicant shall not be eligible for employment or certification until at least one year has elapsed since the completion of

any period of incarceration, community supervision or parole. For eligible applicants with a prior criminal history, the department may consider a range of factors to determine the applicant's fitness to perform the duties and discharge the responsibilities of the position.

Why is Certification Important?



Certification is required for employment as a JPO or JSO. The certification process ensures that an individual has received training in the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively perform their job duties. This ensures a high level of professionalism in the workforce and a high quality of service provision for the youth in the juvenile probation programs and facilities.

What are the Legal Requirements for Certification Renewal by TJJD?

JPO and JSO certifications must be renewed every two years on the officer's birthday. To be eligible for renewal, an officer must:

- be employed by a juvenile probation department or a juvenile facility
- document completion of 80 hours of training during the previous certification period
- confirm the continued absence of disqualifying criminal history.

An officer who fails to renew their certification in a timely manner will be placed on inactive status.

What are the Consequences of Allowing Certification to Lapse or Become Inactive?

An officer whose certification is inactive is unable to perform the duties of a certified officer.

A juvenile facility that allows inactive officers to continue to perform the duties of a certified officer is in violation of TJJD standards and could face serious legal liability in the event of an injury to a juvenile in the facility.